

COUNTY OF SONOMA

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July 30, 2012

Carroll Mortensen, Director
Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (Cal Recycle)
P.O. Box 4025
Sacramento, CA 95812-4025

RE: RE: Beverage Container Recycling Program Reforms and the Cal Recycle Funding for City/County and Conservation Corps – July 30th Comments

Dear Director Mortensen:

On behalf of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to ask Cal Recycle to preserve the funding for city/county recycling programs and for local conservation corps. As Cal Recycle ponders the future of funding from recycling container fees and grapples with your deficit, we ask you recognize the true value-add this program provides local communities and seek other solutions rather than cutting a proven program which is positively impacting residents throughout California.

The city/county payments fund projects that assist in reaching and maintaining the State's recycling goal. These activities include: support for new or existing curbside recycling programs; neighborhood drop-off recycling programs; public education promoting beverage container recycling; and, other beverage container recycling programs. In addition, LCCCs provide a vital service to the community by providing youth between the ages of 18 and 23 with a one-year, nonresidential program that emphasizes work, education, skill building and, community service. The LCCC initiates innovative recycling programs through partnerships forged with a variety of schools, public agencies and local organizations. Shifting this program to an unidentified funding source will jeopardize the success of the LCCC and the Communities that depend on them.

In the North Bay region, we have seen the benefits of this funding through the work of the Conservation Corp North Bay as well as by city and county recycling efforts. Thanks to City/County and Conservation Corp funding from Cal Recycle, the following activities have occurred:

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- 364,592 pounds of material that otherwise would have gone to the landfill has been collected, sorted and recycled
- Recycling has been collected from 859 collection points (504 in Marin County and 355 in Sonoma County) at parks and schools;
- 163 days of recycling services has been provided to 61 special events, including the Marin County Fair (122,000 attendees), Sonoma/Marin Fair, Fairfax Festival, Sunset Season Opener and NASCAR.
- 55 litter abatement projects from streets, waterways and open space lands have been performed;
- 8 waste audits to help schools move toward zero waste have occurred, and;
- Recycling education for nearly 4,000 students annually has been provided.

Your funding supports the local Conservation Corps who are working with the North Bay's at-risk youth and is helping them turn their lives around. These young people are given job skills, helped get their high school diplomas and provided with college scholarships. Investing in these programs is truly an upstream investment which saves the state and local community funds needed for law enforcement and prisons. This is a win-win investment.

We believe a potential solution to the deficit which would preserve these valuable programs, would be to add revenue to the program by adding in all "ready-to-drink" beverages for human consumption in the Beverage Container Recycling Program, rather than cutting vital expenditures.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Shirlee Zane
Chair and Third District Supervisor
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

CC: Paul Yoder
CSAC